

79 2707 THE *K. Burnett*
Bishop of Salisbury's

NEW

PREFACE

TO HIS

Pastoral Care,

CONSIDER'D,

With Respect to the following
Head, *viz.*

- I. The Qualifications of the Clergy.
- II. The Distinction of High and Low Church.
- III. The Present Posture of Affairs.

The Second Edition.

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T H E
Bishop of Salisbury's
N E W
PREFACE, &c.

AMONG all the Discoveries that have been made in this Age, of the Books that had been esteemed lost, there is none, since that of the Epistle of *St. Clemens*, that has been received with more joy than this of *Lactantius's* Book of the *Death of the Persecutors*, for which the World is beholding to the happy Industry of the most learned *Baluzius*, who having found this treasure, not only communicated it to the World, but enriched it with his learned Notes; by which he has added a new Essay, to the many that have already appeared, of his great Sincerity, his profound Learning, and of his solid Judgment: It has been since that time reprinted at *Oxford*, with shorter Notes; in which there are many happy Conjectures, made both for supplying some of the Words that were worn out of the Manuscript Copy, and for correcting some Passages, which the Copyer perhaps writ wrong, and it is upon that Edition that this Translation is made.

The Importance of this Book will be easily apprehended, by those who consider that *Lactantius* was the politest Writer of his time, in whom one finds some-
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what very like *Augustus's* Age revived; he had also particular Opportunities of being well informed of his Subject, by the Post to which he was advanced in *Constantine's* Court, of being his Son's Tutor. It is true his Eloquence carries him often into strains that become an Orator, better than a Historian: for he has a heart of stile, that ought not to be imitated by one that would write History. But he seems to have designed this Book to be a mixed sort of Writing, between a Discourse and a History; so that the Figures that agree not to the one, may be allowed to the other.

The Account that he gives of Saint *Peter's* coming to *Rome*, cuts off the Fable of his being there for five and twenty Years: but if what he says of things at so great a distance from his own time, is not thought so Authentical, and if his Authority seems not strong enough to cut off all those Persecutions that are said to have risen between *Domitian's* Reign and *Decius's*, since he represents all that Interval as a time of a long Peace to the Christians; yet we must at least suppose him, to have been much better informed of that which fell out during the last Persecution; so that the beginning which he assigns to it cuts off all those Legends of Martirs, that (as is pretended) suffered before that Year, and as we cannot doubt of the time in which he tells us the Persecution began, so no more ought we to call in question the Limits that he sets to it; and therefore since he tells us, that *Constance* ordered only, that the Churches in which the Christians held their Assemblies, should be pulled down, and that he would not carry the Persecution further against the Christians themselves; and since he excepts the *Gaules* out of those Provinces that felt the Fury of those Edicts, we see what a number of Legends there are to be cut off. For the truth is, that very soon after this Persecution was over, some that loved either to make (or at least to report) very tragical Stories concerning it, seemed to give no Bounds

to their Invention upon a Subject that was fruitful enough of it self, and so needed not to have been swelled up by such Additions. The Destruction of the Records that the Christians kept, which were so carefully searched after during this Persecution, gave some colour for those pretended Discoveries; for it served turn to give them Credit, to say, that such Relations had been preserv'd from the Searches of those Inquisitors, and so that they were by Accident found out in some Corner, where very probably those that forged them, both laid them and found them: and the matter would no doubt have been received with more Credit, if some Dream or Vision had been pretended, as that which had made the Discovery. Of all those Legends none is more copious, nor less credible than that of the *Thebean Legion*, and that upon many Accounts; but as the silence, not only of *Eusebius* and *Sulpitius Severus*, but of all the other Writers of the fourth Century, gave a just Prejudice against a Story that begun not to appear till the middle of the fifth Century, so the positive Testimony of *Lactantius*, who excepts the Gauls from the Persecution, puts an end to the Fable. For though he shews so great a disposition to speak well of Constance, that this may seem to lessen the Authority of one, who to make his Court with the Son, would naturally raise the Father's Character; yet so remarkable a transaction as that was, could not have been suppress'd with any sort of Decency, by one that must have certainly heard of it if it was true.

The false appearance of a greatness of mind, that was inferred from Diocletian's resigning the Empire, is also taken off by this Relation; since it is plain, that both Diocletian's Brain was turned, and that he was forced to it; so that his Resignation was not the Effect of his Philosophy, but of the Unnatural Ambition of his Son in Law Maximian.

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The Subject of this Discourse, and the Application to which a Translation of it tyed me, together with the present scene of Affairs, led my mind very naturally into more general Thoughts. If the Characters of those ancient Persecutors, such as these, that they had delivered themselves up to all the Brutalities of sensual Pleasure, that they had ruined their Subjects by severe Impositions for maintaining vast Armies, that they had in their Wars, shewed more care than was decent in preserving themselves out of all Danger, that they were weak to the most excessive Flatteries, the profuseness of their Expence in the raising of costly Buildings, their great Success in a Course of many Years, their Superstitious and fearful Tempers, and to crown all, the Cruelty that they practis'd in the Persecution, to which they were unceasingly drawn, and in which they begun at first with requiring all to abjure, besides many other particulars; all these, I say, insensibly carry ones thoughts to make Parallels between some Modern Persecutors, and those that are here set forth: but if the respect due to their sublime Character makes one drive away those less decent sallies of his mind, to which he is carried before he is aware, yet the Importance of this matter leads to speculations that are more General, and by consequence less offensive. And since the Melancholy State of things at present carried me in those Intervals in which I discontinued the dry Work of translating, to consider the Grounds on which those cruel and persecuting Doctrines and Practices are founded, together with the Motives from which they rise, the Characters that accompany them, and the Effects that followed them; I thought I might be forgiven a little, if I took the liberty to swell up the bulk of this small Book with a Preface of some length; in which my design is not only to expose this ill-natur'd Principle, and to shew, that where-ever it is authoris'd, it is a more infallible mark of an Anri-

christian Church, than all the other Characters are of an Infallible Church, to which those pretend, that have died themselves so red in the Blood of others ; but likewise to form in the Minds of those who hate Persecution, perhaps only because they either feel it, or are affraid of it, such a Notion of this Matter, as may preserve them from falling into the same Excesses if a Revolution in the State of Affairs should put it in their Power, to use others as hardly as they have been used by them. It has been often observed, that tho' a Plea for Moderation is the Sanctuary of all the Unfortunate, yet their Fortunes came no sooner to be changed, but that they insensibly got into that Principle which was so much decried by themselves, when their Affairs were in an ill condition ; as if the only quarrel that they had to Persecution, was because they had not the managing of it themselves. I will treat this Subject with all the closeness that the Matter deserves, or that I am capable of ; and will avoid the serving up what I am to propose with the garnishings of the fine sayings of others ; for as that would carry me too far, so a good Reason is so much a better thing, than a round Period, or a laboured Sentence, that the Mind finds it self satisfied with the one, whereas the Fancy is only pleased with the other.

All Persecution rises out of an Impatience of Spirit, which makes a Man less able to bear Contradiction. There is a Tyranny in most Mens nature, which makes Mens nature, which makes them desire to subdue all others by the strength of their understandings ; and such Men have an implacable hatred to all that do not render themselves to their Reasons ; and think that they are affronted when other Men refuse to submit to them ; so that he would strike at Persecution in its root, must begin here, and endeavour to soften Men, especially towards those who differ from them in matters of Religion. This Imperious temper, where

it works upon Subjects of Religion, finds somewhat to raise its spleen, that was of it self Impetuous enough before; and that which is called Fury and Rage, when it is imployed in other Disputes, comes to be called Zeal when it is turned towards the Theories that relate to another World.

But when we consider what a sublime thing *Divine Truth* is, and what a poor low thing the *Mind of Man* is, we shall see Cause to blunt a little the edge of our Spirits, if they are too sharp in such matters. Man is much governed by Fancy, and Fancy follows the texture of the animal Spirits, which renders many more capable of apprehending Objects that are some way proportioned to them, and more disposed to follow them; so that *Temper* prepares Men for some Opinions, and prepossesses them against others. With the greater part of Mankind, *Education* is so powerful, that they are scarce able ever to overcome it; and if *Education* and *Temper* have hit together, it will require an extraordinary elevation to rescue a Man from their force. Men likewise receive with their Impressions of Religion such a respect for them, as makes them look on every thought that calls them in question as criminal: and when Persons are bred up to disquiet themselves with Scruples, if they have so much as made a doubt of their Religion, it is hard to see them adhere so firmly to the *Principles* of their *Education*, which stick so fast to the worst sort of Men, that even Atheists themselves, after all the pains they take to get rid of them, cannot shake them off so entirely, but that they will be apt to return oft upon them. Men that think much, and that reason well, that are freed from the bias of Interest, Honour, Kindred and Custom do give them, and that have leisure to examine matters carefully, may indeed get above all these: yet there are so few that can do this, and there are yet so much fewer that will do it; that it is rather a Wonder to see so many change their persuasions, than

to see so few do it. And indeed it is so sublime a *Theory* to think on God and his Attributes and Works, or to think of another State, and of the Way that leads to it, that till God furnishes out a new Mission of *Apostles* with a Measure of those extraordinary Gifts which he poured out on the great *Pentecost*; it is not easy to imagine how the Conversion of *Heathen Nations* should be made. For tho' the *Idolatri* of some of these is extreme gross, yet their *Priests* have such symbolical Significations for all these Rites, that they do much diminish the Horror which is raised by the first sight of them in the minds of Strangers; and since the chief grounds, upon which we prove the *Christian Religion*, are taken from the *Prophecies* in the *Old Testament*, and their Accomplishment in the *New*, from the Evidence that was given concerning the *Miracles*, the *Death*, and the *Resurrection* of *Christ*, which we confirm from the collateral proofs of the State of that time, of the Writings of the Enemies of this *Religion*, and of that Succession of Authors that in all the Ages that have past since, have mentioned those Matters, and cited those *Books* which we hold to be *Divine*. All this is so evident to those who can make the Enquiry, that it is strange to find how any one can withstand it; but to *Barbarians*, who know nothing of it, and who have no way of informing themselves concerning it, all this can signify nothing. So that in order to the convincing their Understandings, (for I do not treat of God's secret Methods in touching their Consciences) I do not see how we should expect that they should yield easily, unless there were a new Power of working *Miracles* conferred on those who labour in this Work. And what noise soever the *Missionaries* may make with their *Miracles* in those remote Parts, it is plain, these are all Impostures; for the most necessary of all other *Miracles* for the Conversion of strange Nations, being the *Gift of Tongues*, with which the *Apostles* were so wonderfully furnisht

at first, and since they all are forced to acknowledge, that this is wanting to them, we have all possible Reason to conclude, that God would not change his Methods, or qualify Men to work Wonders, and not give them that which is the most sensible and the most useful of all others, towards that end for which he authorises them.

But to return from this Digression, a Man is scarce the Master of his own Thoughts: Habit. Constitution and other things do so concur, that he cannot open his Eyes to new Objects, nor see them in a new Light other than in which he has been accustomed to view them; and a Man can no more change his Notions of things, because a Set of new Opinions would accomodate him better, than he can change the *Self* that his senses, his ear or his tast has in their Objects; a Man may prevaricate, but he still thinks as he thinks; and cannot think otherwise, because he would have himself do so: But if a Man is not master of his own mind, much less is any other Man the master of it. No Man has that Superiority over any other Man's Reason, as to expect that it should always accommodate it self to his: and the severest exercise of Tyranny must still leave the thoughts at liberty: the forcing a Man to say, or do otherwise than he thinks, by threatnings, the execution of which is above his force to endure, is only they delivering over such a person to the rack of his own Conscience here, and to all those miseries hereafter, which must be the portion of Hypocrites, and of Dissemblers with God or Man. Nor is there such an infallible Distinction in one man's nature from another, that the one is more like to be in the right than the other; Since therefore, among all those that differ, some must be in the wrong, those that have the power in their hands, may possibly be of the wrong side, and in that case all their Severity is turned against the *Just* those who believe it: And since God makes all shine.

shine, and the Rain to fall on the just as well as the unjust, *Gideon's* reasoning may be applied to this matter, if *Baal* be as God, let him plead for himself; and the force of *Gamaliel's* Argument, that if it is of Men, it will come to nought; and if it is of God, we must not fight against him. As it silenced an Assembly of very fierce Persecutors, so it is full as strong now, as it was then: For Reason is eternal, and changeth not. It seems also plain, that those Actions which concern humane Society, belong indeed to the Authority of the Magistrate; but that our thoughts, with relation to God, and such actions as arise out of those thoughts, and in which others have no interest, are God's immediate Province; and can belong to no other Jurisdiction. God only know, our thoughts, as he only can change them; so that a Magistrate by encroaching upon them, breaks in upon God's propriety, and upon that essential right of humane nature, of worshipping God according to our conviction, which is, in us antecedent to all humane Government, and never become subject to it.

But if the general Theories from the nature of Man give a very favourable view of what is now advanced, the Characters of the *Christian Religion*, and the many express Texts that are in it should determine this matter more positively. The Religion reveal'd by *Moses* consisted in temporal Promises, an earthly Canaan, and all the blessings of this Life; so that since the *Jews* had all these things by Virtue of it; and therefore it was as just, that a *Jew* should have been put to Death for the violation of those Laws, as it is lawful for us to put a Man to death that coins Money: yet as for Opinions the Case was different, even among the *Jews*; and therefore, tho the Doctrines of the *Sadduces* struck at the Foundations of all Religion, the *Pharisees*, when they had the upper hand, never carried the matter so far as to proceed to extremities against them. But what Severities soever might have agreed with the Mosaical

Mosaical Dispensation, they seem to be all out of doors under the Christian Religion; which gives us no earthly Canaan, no temporal blessings, nor the Rules for Civil Society: but having the World in the possession of their temporal Rights, it only came to superadd to those the Doctrines and Rules of a Divine Discipline, upon vvhich the Happiness or Miserier of another State do depend. Novv it seems to be an uncontested Rule in Justice, that in whatf'ever Society one is engaged, the violation of the Laws of that Society can only infer a Forfeiture of all that one had or might have expected by virtue of it: but this cannot be carried so far, as to make one forfeit all that he holds by virtue of any other Society, to which he belongs; and therefore since we hold our temporal Estates and Liberties not by virtue of our Christianity, but as we are the Members of the State or Kingdom to which we belong, our doing any thing that is only contrary to our Religion, may well make us forfeit all that belongs to us by virtue of our Baptismal Covenant; but this ought not to be carried so far as to cut of those Rights that we have antecedent to our Christianity, as we are Men, and the Subjects of a civil Government. Our Saviour confirmed all this by saying, That his Kingdom was not of this World; that he came not to destroy, but to save; and by giving this Rule of Justice, of doing to others that which we would have others do to us: which would soon let all persecutors see how differently they act to it: but above all, our Saviour has made the Doctrines of Meekness and Charity, such main Ingredients in his Gospel, that he has made them the Characters by which his Disciples may be every where known, and his Spirit of Love is so diffused thro' the whole Writings of the N. Testament, that how hard soever it may be to understand some of the other passages that are in them, yet there is no Ambiguity at all in those that set this forth; we are not only restrained from

from ruining those who differ from us, but we are required to love them, to bear with them, and to deal with them in the Spirit of Meekness: there are some of the Epistles that do not mention several of the Duties incumbent on Christians, yet there is not one how short soever, in which this of Love is not proposed, in terms that are both strong and tender; while the Church of *Corinth* was almost rent asunder by variety of Opinions, and by the different Parties that followed the several Teachers that had been among them; *St. Paul* does not enter much into the Grounds of their Disputes, but recommends Love and Charity to them, in terms that shew how much he was inflamed while he writ them; and he is carried into all the Raptures of a divine Eloquence that so transporting a Subject a Subject could inspire: *S. John*, lived so long to see a great deal of the fervour of the Christian Religion sicken; but when he writ to revive that Spirit, the Argument upon which he dwells chiefly, is to Persuade all to love one another, and he does that in the softest and most melting Terms that can be imagined, The Controversy concerning the Obligation that lay on the Gentiles for obeying the *Mosaical Law* was judged by the Apostles against the Judaizers, and the Inferences that depended on that Controversy were such, that *Saint Paul* shews, they went so far as to make void the Death of Christ; yet the same Apostle is gentle to those that without seeing the extent of these Consequences, were carried away by those Judaizers; so that he acknowledges, that in observing them from a good Motive, they were acceptable to God; and that as the Kingdom of God, or the Gospel, consisted not in these scrupulous Distinctions of Meats and of Drinks, but in Righteousness, Peace and Joy in the Holy Ghost; so he adds, that every Man was to endeavour to be fully persuaded in his own Mind, and was not to judge his Brother in such Matters, but to

to leave him to the Judgment of God. This way of managing a Controversie, that was of such importance, and that was maintained vvith so stiff an Opposition, even to that extraordinary Authority that has been the measure upon vvhich all the succeeding Ages of the Church, ought to have formed themselves, and vvhen the Apostles, that had an infallible Assistance, and so might have spoken in a strain of a higher Authority than any that have come after them, yet thought fit to treat of those Matters in such an humble and softning stile, those vvho cannot pretend to such a Direction, ought not to take upon them to dictate, and to threaten and destroy those vvho differ from them.

It is indeed an amasing thing, to see how much the Christian Church has departed from that Pattern; and when one considers the first beginnings of the Christian and the Mahometan Religion, he is not a little surprised to see the changes that have befallen both. The blessed Author of our Holy Religion, as he was a Pattern for Humility and Charity, so he was made perfect thro' Sufferings; and his Religion, as it contains precepts futeable to the Example that he gave, which are set down in the plainest and most persuading Expressions possible, so it gained its first Glory in the World, and obtained its chief Triumphs over it, by the Meekness and Gentleness, and the Love and Charity of those who embraced it; on the contrary, the Mahometan Religion began in the Person of that Impostor, with all the Fierceness of rage, and was carried on by the Sword, by which Mahomet pretended that he was sent of God to convert the World: The Nations that have received the Mahometan Religion, are by their Constitution rough and barbarous; and yet how shameful a reverse of the first beginning of the two Religions, is but too visible to the World; the Mahometans in a course of several Ages are so much softned, that instead of that cruelty with vvhich their Religion appeared at first, they

they are now so gentle, that those of a Religion, which believe theirs to be only an Imposture, live secure under them, and know the Price that the Liberty of their Conscience must rise to; and that being payed, they enjoy in all other respects the Protection of the Government, together with the publick Exercise of their Religion; whereas on the other hand, that part of the Christian Church, that pretends the highest, has so far departed from the Meekness of its Author, and of his first Followers, that notwithstanding all the polishings of Learning and Civility that are in it, it is now the cruelest and the most implacable Society that has ever yet appeared in the World; if there were no other Evidences but this single one, it is enough to demonstrate, how much that Body has departed from its first Institution; and if our Saviour has given us a short Abridgment of the Character of the Devil in these two qualities, that he is a Lyar and a Murderer, then any Body of Men, that has decreed, that faith is not to be kept to Hereticks, and that has also decreed the Murder of so many Innocent Persons who have done nothing against that Civil Society to which they belong, that deserves a forfeiture of their Lives; such a Body, I say, if we may take our Saviours Character for a Rule, looks more like the Followers of that fallen Spirit, than the Body of which the Lamb of God is the Head. And when we consider the plain and express Words, in which the great Duties of a Holy Life are delivered in Scripture, but most particularly those of Love and Charity, and the Darkeness that are in many other passages of which the meaning is more disputable, it looks like an unaccountable Perverseness to see Men, who still pretend to make that Book their Rule, yet to be so visibly faulty in executing the one, and so excessively severe in opposing the other, of which I shall content my self to give one single Instance.

Pope Leo the Tenth in the Reformation that he set out, with the concurrence of the Lateran Council, order'd a severe Prosecution to be made of all Hereticks, and that all the Laws against them should be put in execution; but at the same time, he order'd such slight punishment against those that should wilfully and publicly Blaspheme God and Christ, even tho' they relapsed in it over and over again, that it is plain he had no mind to deter Men with too much severity from the practice of that which was so common in his own Court; a small Fine, or the Forfeiture of the Profits of a Benefice, is all the punishment that he laid on the one, even with Clergy-men relapsed in it. This may serve to shew, that tho' naturally one is apt to think Blasphemy a much more heinous Crime than Heresie, yet a Pope, together with a Council, which they pretend was General, made a Distinction in the punishing of them, which is very little for their Honour.

The Christians did, during the first Ages, declare highly against all Cruelty on the Account of a Difference of Persuasion in matters of Religion; and tho' their Interest Naturally led them to this, yet we pass a very hard Judgment on those times, if we think that they were only of that mind, because the Power was then in the Hands of their Enemies. When the Empire turned Christian, the very Heathen Worship was not only tolerated for above a whole Age together, but the Heathens themselves continued to be in the chief Employments of the Empire; and it is pleasant to see how the Heathens, that had so long persecuted the Christians, and that had contrived the severest of all the Persecutions under *Julian*, which very probably had been put in execution, if he had returned victorious from his *Persian* Expedition, saw the State of things no sooner altered, than they began to employ all their Eloquence in the behalf of Toleration; as if Liberty of Conscience had been an essential Right of Mankind,

Mankind, from which they ought never to be cut off; and they carry'd this so far, as to pretend, that a difference in Religion tends more to the Honour of God, than a Uniformity in it could do; and so they fancied, that a variety in it was acceptable to God.

The first severity that Christians practis'd upon one another, was the banishing of *Arius*, and a few of his Followers; it must be acknowledged, that this seems to be the utmost extent of Civil Authority in those matters; for certainly a Government may put such Persons out of its Protection, that are Enemies to its Peace, and so banish them upon great occasions, giving them leave to sell their Estates, and to carry away with them all that belongs to them; yet this being all that any Humane Government can claim, it ought not to be applied too easily nor rashly, till it is visible, that all other Remedies are ineffectual, and that the publick Safety can be no other way secured; but tho' this severity against *Arius* had no great effects, yet the *Arians* had no sooner the Power in their hands, than they put in practice first all the Contrivances of Craft and Fraud, together with many less crying Violences, under *Constance*, and they carried this afterwards to a more open Persecution under *Valens*; and after that, both in *Spain* and *Africa* it appeared, that a cruel Spirit was so inherent in that party, that it shewed it self as oft as ever they had it in their Power; but while *Valens* persecuted in his Division of the Empire, it is observ'd, that *Valentinian* his Brother thought it was enough to support the Orthodox, without persecuting the other; *Gratian* carried the matter further, and tolerated both almost equally. And in the happy turn under *Theodosius*, at what pains was *St. Gregory Nazianzen* to restrain the Orthodox from retaliating upon the *Arians* the ill treatment that they had suffered from them; and not only the *Novarians*, but even the *Arians*, continued to have their Churches in the Imperial Cities.

Cities. The first Instance of the Employing the Secular Arm against Hereticks, that was set on by any of the Orthodox, was under the Reign of that bloody Tyrant *Maximus*, and it was managed by two such scandalous Bishops, that their ill Lives is no small Prejudice against every thing that was carried on by such Instruments. This was condemned by the best Bishops of that Age, and the ill Effects of that Severity are very copiously marked by the Historian. One is unwilling, for the sake of those Ages, to reflect on the Rigour that appears in some Laws that are in the Code; yet the mild behaviour of *Atticus*, *Proclus*, and some other Bishops, is marked with the praises that were due to it; and it is probable, that those Laws were rather made to terrify, than that they should be executed.

The *Donatists*, after a Contest of above 120 Years continuance, that was managed at first more gently, grew at last so fierce and intolerable, that not being contented with their own Churches, they broke in upon the Churches of those of the Unity; and committed many Outrages on the Persons of some of the Bishops, putting out the Eyes of some, and leaving others for Dead; the Bishops upon that consulted, whether they ought to demand not only the Emperor's Protection, but the Application of the Laws made against Hereticks to the *Donatists*. *St. Austin* and some Bishops opposed this for some time; but they yielded at last; and these Laws were so severely executed, that not only the *Donatists* themselves complained heavily of them, but *St. Austin* in several Letters that he writ to the Magistrates upon this occasion, made the same complaints; he interceded very earnestly for the *Donatists*, and said, that it detracted much from the Glory of the Church, that had received so much Honour from the sufferings of the Martyrs, to see others suffer upon the account of the Church; and he told them plainly, that

if they did not proceed more moderately, the Bishops would suffer all that could come upon them from the Rage of the Donatists, rather than Complain any more to those who acted so rigorously. Yet tho' St. Austin condemn'd the Excesses of the Civil Magistrates in some particulars, he set himself to justify Severity in General, when it was employed upon the account of Religion, and all the moderate Pleadings for Liberty, that are to be found either in *Tertullian*, *Cyprian*, and more copiously in our Author *Lactantius*, with relation to Heathens, and the like Reasonings that are to be found in *Athanasius*, *Hilary*, and *Lucifer*, with Relation to the Persecutions of the *Arians*, were in a great measure forgot; St. Austin had a heat of Imagination, that was very copious, which way soever he turned it; and this was employed chiefly in allegorising Scripture, so as to bring together a vast number of proofs for every cause that he undertook; without troubling himself to examine critically what the true meaning of those Passages might be; and he is so apt to run out in all his Reasonings into excessive Amplifications, and into all the Figures of copious and uncorrected Eloquence, that it is no wonder to find that passage of our Saviour in the Parable, *compel them to enter in*, with some other places misapplied on this occasion. With that Father the Learning of the Western Church fell very low, so that his Works came to be more read in the succeeding Ages, than the Writings of all the other Fathers; and in this, as in other things, Men that knew not how to reason themselves, contented themselves with that late and cheap way of copying from him, and of depending on his Authority. The incursion of the Northern Nations, that overthrew the Roman Empire, and those Polishings of Learning and Civility that fell with it, brought on a Night of Ignorance, that can scarce be apprehended, by those who have not read the Writings of the following Ages: Superstition grew upon the ruins of Learning, and eat up all. The fierce Tempers of the Northern People being nursed up in Ignorance, and wrought on by superstition, were easily leavened with Cruelty; perhaps the Holy Wars, and what they observed in the Rage as well as in the Successes of the *Saracens*, heightened this further; at last Heresie came to be reckoned the greatest of all Crimes; and as it condemned Men to everlasting Burning, so it was thought that those might be well anticipated by temporary ones of the Inquisitors Kindling. It is true, the Church pretended that she would shed no Blood; but all this was insufferable juggling; for the Churchmen declared who were obstinate or relapsed Hereticks; and the Secular Arm was required to be ever in readiness to execute their sentence. This was not only claimed by the Bishops, but it was made a part of their Oath at their Consecration, that they should Oppose
and

and Persecute Hereticks to the utmost of their Power : Nor were they contented to proceed by the common Rules of Justice upon Acculations and Witnesses ; but all Forms were superceded, and they by vertue of their *Pastoral Authority*, (as if that had been given them to Worry their Sheep, and not to Feed them) objected Articles to their Prisoners upon suspicion, and required them to purge themselves of them by Oath ; and because Bishops were not perhaps all so equally Zealous and Cruel, some of them being Persons of great Quality, so that some remnants of a generous Education, and of their lay pity, might still hang about them ; that bloody Man *Dominick* took this work to task, and his Order has ever since furnished the World with a set of *Inquisitors*, compared to whom all that had ever dealt in Tortures in any former times were but Bunglers.

So far has this Melancholy Speculation of the Degeneracy of the Church of *Rome* carried me ; they at last came to extol a Zeal against *Heresie* as the highest Act of Piety towards God ; and since *Heresie* is reckoned by *St. Paul* among the *Works of the Flesh*, it seemed as just to punish it in the severest manner, as it was to punish any of the other *Works of the Flesh* ; and since all Hereticks, were looked on as Persons damned, all Tenderness towards them, and pity for them, was as far extinguished as it was possible. For a false Religion will not easily have the better of good Nature so entirely, as to root it quite out ; tho' it must be acknowledged that the *Roman Religion* has done more towards that, than any other that has ever yet appeared in the World. All the room that was left for good Nature, was the favourable Definition that was given of *Heresie* ; by which Obstinacy was made its peculiar Character, that distinguished it from Error, which lies in a more Innocent Mistake concerning Divine Matters ; and as many have explained this Obstinacy, it amounts to a continuing in Error after one is convinced of it. This Notion of *Heresie*, which has been received by many of the greatest Men even in the Church of *Rome* it self, seems to agree well with that of *St. Paul's* ranking *Heresie* among the *Works of the Flesh* ; for if it is merely a mistake in the Judgment, in which one continues, because he cannot overcome his persuasion, nor see Reasons that are strong enough to oblige him to change his Mind, such an adhering to Error may be called any thing rather than a *Work of the Flesh*. But if a Man from a Principle of Interest, Pride, or Discontent, either throws himself into ill Opinions, or continues in them after his Mind is better enlightened, so that he stifles and denies that inward Conviction, then the Reason is very plain, why such an ill Temper of Mind should be reckoned a *Work of the Flesh*, because it plainly arises out of a depraved Nature.

I will not here enter into so troublesome an Enquiry as it would be to examine how far an Erroneous Conscience acquits one before God; for that must be left to him, who will judge every Man according to his Works, and who best knows how far he will accept of a general Repentance of unknown Sins, and a general Act of Faith, even of Truths that are yet unknown; but as for the Judgments of Men, certainly when the other parts of ones Life make it clear, not only to a Judgment of Charity, but even to that of Discretion, that he is sincere, and that he means well, it is hard to know when he is Obstinate, and when his Errors become Heresies, that is to say, Works of the Flesh.

So far have I been led upon the consideration of the Spirit of Persecution, that is not only warranted by Custom, and a long continued Practice; but is by the Authority not only of Popes, but even of General Councils, established into a Law on the Church of Rome. I am carried next into a Scene of Thoughts that are more particularly suited to the Doctrines of the Reformed Churches; and here it must be acknowledged, that Persecution is a more justifiable thing according to the Principles of the Church of Rome, than it is according to our Tenets; for the Church of Rome, that pretends to be Infallible, has a better Right to demand a blind Submission from all its Subjects, and to treat those roughly who refuse to grant it, than a Church that pretends to nothing but a Power of Order and Government; and that confesses, she may be mistaken. Our being Subject to Error, is unreasonably urged, when Men would carry it so far as to make us doubt of all things; yet it ought at least to have this effect on us, as to keep us from being too ready to judge hardly of those who are of another mind, or to use them roughly for it; since it is possible, that they may be in the Right, and that we may be mistaken; at least, they may have very probable Reasons for their Opinions, which if they do not quite justify their Mistakes, yet do very much excuse and lessen them. It is likewise visible, that all severe Proceedings upon the diversity of Opinions, how effectual soever they may be on base minded Men, who will always make Ship-wracks of a good Conscience, when it comes in competition with the Love of this present World, yet work quite contrarywise on Men of awakened Understandings and generous Souls; instead of gaining on such Persons, these inspire them with horror at a sort of Men who go about to ruin companies of People, and never did them hurt. It is from this, that those Violent Hatreds arise among Men of different Persuasions. Every Man is not capable to understand an Argument, or to be much disturbed at it; and those Divines, that carry their Speculations further into the Consequences of Opinions, whether Real or Imaginary, grow hot and angry at one another upon those Heads, yet the People understand them little, and feel them less; but every Man feels an Injury, and Nature makes her Inferences very quick upon it; and concludes, that those who use us ill, hate us; and

and there must be a great degree of Regeneration to keep Men from hating those that hate them; upon this arises all the Animosity that is among the several Parties; for every one reckoning himself a Member of that Body to which he associates himself, thinks that he is obliged to resent all the Injuries that are done to his Fellow-members, as much as if they were done to himself in particular; and by the same natural Logick, he casts the Guilt of the Wrongs done his own Party, not only on those Individuals of the other Party, from whom they did more immediately arise, but upon the whole Body of them; and so here a War is kindled in Men's Breasts, and when that is once formed within, it will find some unhappy occasion or other to give it self a vent. Those who are ill used, are in a State, like that of a Maj's of humours in the Body, which rous about leys perceived, till some unlucky Accident has weakened any part of it; and then they will all discharge themselves on the part that suffers. Men that are uneasy, naturally love Changes; for these are like the shifting of Postures, they give some present ease, and they flatter the Patient with the hope of more to follow.

The Advice that the old Man of Sirmium sent his Son, was certainly very wise; he had Intercepted the whole Roman Army in the Hills, shutting up the Passages so that they could neither go backward nor forward; the Father advised him first to dismiss them all without any Injury, since that would probably oblige the Romans; or if that were not followed, to cut them all off; for that would weaken them considerably; whereas the middle Method, which the General took, of letting them all go, having first put a publick Affront on them, enraged the Romans without weakning them. According to this Advice it seems evident, that all considerable Bodies of Men, that are in any State, are to be set at ease, or to be quite rooted out; and there is nothing wise in this severe Method, but an extreme and an unrelenting Persecution, and in this point, if the Church of Rome has forgot the Innocence of the Dove, yet it must be confessed, that she has retained the Wisdom of the Serpent.

Persecution is not only hurtful to those that suffer many hard things by it, but is likewise mischievous to them, by the aversion that it inspires in them to those at whose hands they suffer, by the ill Habit of mind into which it throws them, and by those violent Projects and Convulsions which do very naturally come into the heads of those, who as they feel much, so they fear yet more.

Those that do persecute, tho' they seem to triumph for a while, with the Spoils of their Enemies; yet will soon feel how this sinks their Credit extremely among those that were more Indifferent Spectators, while the Debate was managed with the Pen or Tongue, but they will certainly take part at least in their Compassions with the Miserable; and will be disposed to think ill, not only of these

those Men that are heavy upon their harmless Neighbours, but even of the Cause it self, that is supported by such Methods.

The Multitude, even of the lowest Order of Men has a remnant of good Nature left, which shews it self in the sad looks that all put on at the Executions even of Malefactors: but if a false Religion has not quite extinguish'd Humanity in its Voraries, this will make a more sensible Impression, when Men that have done nothing amiss, and are only in fault because they cannot help thinking as they do, are made Sacrifices to the Rage of others, that perhaps have little more to say for themselves, but that they are in possession of the Law; which in the next Revolution of Affairs that may fall out, will be an Argument so much the Stronger for using themselves in the same manner, because it is a just Retaliation on them for that which they made others to suffer.

The Men of Persecution do also naturally engage themselves into the Intrigues of Courts, and all the Factions of Parties: they enter into Dependances upon Ministers of State, who drive them on to execute all their Passions, and to serve all their Ends: and who have too good understandings themselves not to laugh at the officious forwardness of those who are perhaps more eager than is intended, in the doing of that for which those very Persons, whose blind Instruments they are at one time, will reproach them at another.

In short, Persecution does extremely vitiate the Morals of the Party that manages it. The worst Men, so they are furious and violent, are not only connived at, but are even courted: and Men otherwise of severer Morals, will insensibly slacken, by reason of their Engagements with vicious Men, whom they will find themselves forced to Cherish and Employ: and if those who have persecuted others, fall under a Reverse of Fortune, and come to suffer themselves a little of that which they made others feel, as their ill behaviour will deprive them in a great measure, of those Compassions that would otherwise work towards them, so it will raise within them many uneasy Reflections upon their own Actings, which will prove but Melancholy Companions to them in their Afflictions: and these will force them to conclude, that because they shewed no Mercy, therefore they now meet with the requital of Judgment without Mercy; which how unjust soever it may be, in those by whom they suffer, yet they will find it meet to look up to God, and to confess, that just and righteous are all his Ways: and it may be reasonably apprehended, that it may have contributed not a little to fill up the Measure of the Sins of a Church, and to bring down severe strokes upon them, when the visible Danger, which was apparent from a formidable Enemy,

never, could not turn their Thoughts to that side, but that instead of using legal and just Precautions for their own Security, they let themselves loose to all the Rages of a mad Prosecution of some poor undiscerning and deluded People; and all this to gratify their own Revenges, or to Insinuate themselves into the Favours of those who do now justly laugh at them, when the turn that they intended is served by their means; and those who would prepare themselves for those hard things which they have reason to expect from a Church that has always delighted to bath her self in Blood, ought seriously to profess their Repentance of this Fury in Instances that may be as visible and edifying as their Rage has been publick and destructive.

But there remains yet one point, without which I am sensible that this Discourse will appear defective; I know it is extremly tender in our present Circumstances, yet that does not defer me from venturing on it; it is, *How far Protestants ought to Tolerate Papists.* It seems at first view the most unreasonable thing in the World, for those to pretend to it, who we are sure must destroy us, as soon as it is in their Power to do it. I say they must do it; since by those Councils, which they themselves hold to be General, the extirpation of Hereticks, and the breaking off Faith to them, has been so formally decreed, that it is a foolish piece of presumption to imagine that they can ever lay down those Principles. Infallibility is the bottom upon which their Church is built, and she must be as infallible in the Rules that she gives of Morality, as she is in her Decisions in Points of Faith: for all the Reasons that are given for private Persons depending on the Church for the Rule of their Faith, do bid as strongly to depend likewise on the Church for the Rule of Life and Manners. If we are in Danger of forgetting, what was decreed in that Church so long ago, they take pains from time to time to refresh our Memories, not only by their Cruelties in the last Age, for which there was so much more to be said, than for later Barbarities, because the Reformation was lookt on as a revolt then made from established Laws: and if Persecution can be at any time excus'd, it is in the first beginnings of Heresies, before the Evil has spread it self into greater Numbers of Men: The Heats that were rais'd in the first Formation of that Breach, may some way take off from the guilt of the Sacrifices that they made: for Men in the first Surprizes of Anger do seldom Reason true, or Act wisely; but when a whole Age has pass'd, and those first Heats are in a great measure laid, and when all the Securities that could possibly be demanded have been given, and while these have been Enact'd into the most Obligatory Laws that could be contriv'd, which were confirm'd by solemn Oaths; and while the Persons to be secur'd had not given the least Pretence to their Enemies to say, that they had forfeited those Rights by any ill Behaviour of theirs; yet the Breach of Faith, and the Rage of Persecution, that we see before our Eyes, both in France and Piedmont, are things that do not only Raise an Indignation in humane Nature, that cannot be well govern'd, without a very Extraordinary Measure of Grace, but they offer even to our Reasons, Arguments against all Lenity towards them, that are very hard to be resist'd: And it is certain, that all the Regulars, and chiefly the Jesuites, are so possess'd with those Maxims, and with that Temper, that it is a Degree of

of Credulity scarce to be reconciled to common Prudence, to fancy, that ever they can change their Natures. Those Notions are infused in them with their first Education; they are restless by their tempers; they are dedicated not only to their Church, but to their Order; from which they can expect no dissipation, but by their Activity and Fierceness; they are taught to Hate us, and to pursue our Ruin by all Methods possible, and they have Receipt for the greatest sins, if the Penitent will come up to their price; and the Pardon of Sin will be thought a good penny worth, when it is to be the Destruction of Hereticks.

I know the Jesuits study to persuade the World, and that they have infused it into a great Prince, that P. de la Chaise has had no hand in the Violences now on foot in France, but that he has opposed them, and so they throw them entirely on the Arch-Bishop of Paris, and on a Lady that is now in great Credit; so ready are they to Sacrifice the Reputation even of their chief Patrons, when it may serve their turn to deceive others; but the contrary of this is so evident, that it is a new Discovery of the Impudence of that sort of Men. Yet after all this, and after all that can be said from those Principles, that subject them to a foreign Jurisdiction, and that vest the Pope with a Power of Deposing Heretical Princes, where I acknowledge the Inferences are so just as well as so severe, that I know not how to answer them well to my self; yet the Body of the People, that are bred up to the other Points of Popery, and that know nothing of these, which their Priests keep as Mysteries from them, and either deny them quite, or disguise them so that they shew in other Colours to those who believe implicitly, and who do not give themselves the trouble to enquire into such matters; but think it is safer, as well as easier, to take things upon trust; they I say, are not so formidable as to raise our Fears and Jealousies so to high a pitch; and Secular Priests are naturally a softer sort of Men, who have not the Sourness that seems to belong to all the Orders that are among them; nor are they so far possessed with the ill-natured and dangerous Opinions that belong to that Church, as to be past cure; and as a losing of rigour towards such, would lay the Apprehensions that Self-preservation does naturally raise in all People, so it would at least make the utmost degree of Severity, that seems reconcilable to the Common Principles of Humane Society, or of Christianity, appear more justifiable, if a restlessness under such easy Circumstances should afterwards drive a Government to it. But the returning of the Severities that our Brethren have suffered at the Hands of the Men of that Religion on the Papists of England, is a Practice so contrary to the Christian Religion, and to the Principles of the Protestant Religion, that I do not stick to say it, that I had rather see the Church of England laid under a very severe Persecution from the Church of Rome, than see it fall to persecute Papists, when it should come to its turn to be able to do it. The former will only serve to unite us among our selves, and to purge us from our Dross; and in particular from any of the Leaven of the Doctrine of Persecution, that we have not yet quite thrown out; but the other would very much stain the purest and best constituted Church in the World; and it would be too near an approach to the Cruelty of that Church, which we cannot enough detest; but how much soever we must hate their Corruption, we must still remember, that they are Men and Christians, tho' perhaps of a coarse grain; and that we our selves are Reformed Christians, who in Imitation of our Blessed Master, must not render evil for evil, but overcome evil with good.

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Gilbert Burnet.

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